paleoltronic

super nintendo

christmas

sonic the hedgehog

game gear

cdrv

1991

Intially priced at $199.99 at launch, competition between the SNES and the Genesis would put downward pressure on the retail cost of both systems as the 90s wore on.

SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

First released in Japan as the Super Famicom, the Super Nintendo was Nintendo's 16-bit answer to Sega's Mega Drive, which had begun to seriously erode the 8-bit NES's market share. Developers locked-in to the NES were also eager to have a more advanced system upon which to develop their games. The Super Famicom quickly outsold its rivals in Japan and regained market dominance.

The system was redesigned for the North American market, branded the Super Nintendo, and released in the autumn of 1991. It was launched with few titles but chiefly one of those was Super Mario World, a 16-bit update to the Super Mario franchise which introduced Yoshi, a dinosaur who can eat his enemies. Mario and Luigi can also ride Yoshi.

Sound Blaster was a series of peripheral sound cards for IBM compatible computers, which were the standard for audio on that platform until onboard sound chips became standard in the PC industry. The Sound Blaster was widely supported by games published in the 1990s. The Pro model featured stereo sound.

With the release of the SNES, the North American console war really heated up. Sega had had a head start with the Genesis, positioning itself as a "cool" console for mature gamers (teens). Wanting to break into that segment, Nintendo arranged to have exclusive rights to the console version of arcade hit Street Fighter II for a limited time -- but long enough to seriously dent Sega's market share.

By 1992, the Genesis had declined to 60% of the American console market, and the two rivals would see-saw back and forth over the years, neither obtaining a definitive lead until the release of Nintendo's Donkey Kong Country would see the SNES surge ahead, and temporarily fend off more advanced rivals such as Sony's Playstation.

Nintendo ceased production of the Super Nintendo in 1999, after selling 49 million units worldwide.

Nintendo may have launched the SNES, but Sega wasn't standing still!

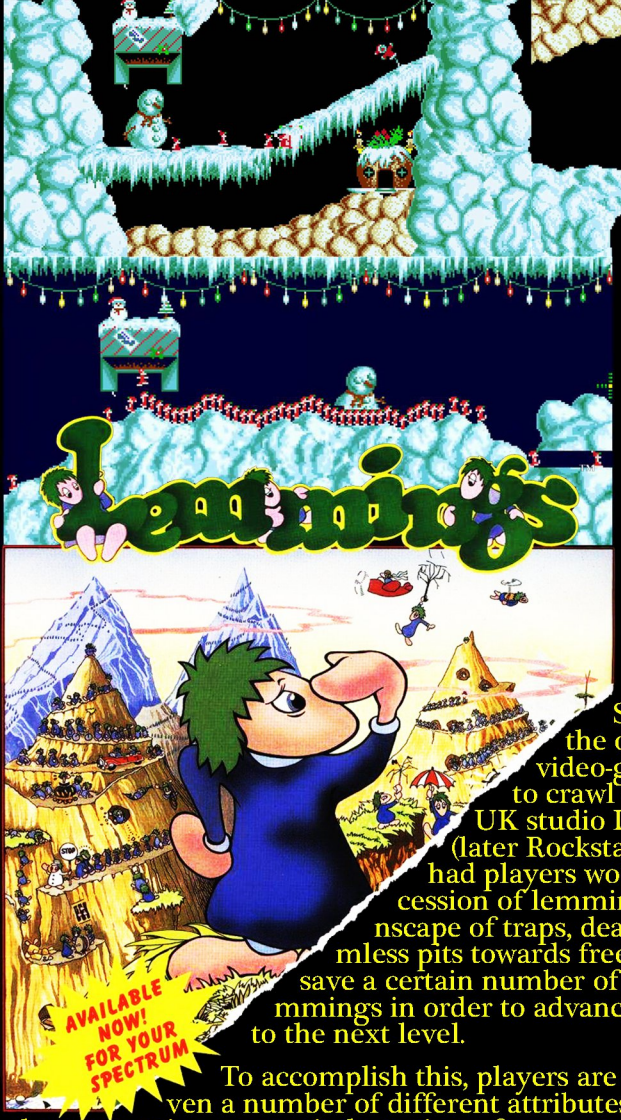
Desperately in need of a mascot to carry the Genesis brand, Sega ordered its in-house development team to design a game featuring a new character, one that would be suitable for heading a new video-game franchise. The team landed on a blue hedgehog with spikes, and named him Sonic, a reference to his ability to roll quickly through the game, a technique previously demonstrated by the team's programmer.

During development, the team considered various animals, including a rabbit and a kangaroo, but these were not considered aggressive enough, and the final choice was between an armadillo or a hedgehog. Sonic was coloured to match the Sega logo, and his red shoes were meant to invoke Santa Claus and aid in Christmas sales.

Released during summer of 1991, Sonic the Hedgehog solidified the Genesis' share of the North American console market and helped defend against the invasion of the Super Nintendo that autumn. A side-scrolling platform game, the player guides Sonic as he is tasked with defeating the evil Doctor Robotnik. The Doctor has turned the woodland creatures into an army of evil robots, and Sonic must free the animals by jumping on the robots, cracking them open. Sonic can also collect gold rings; obtaining 100 of them gains an extra life, however if Sonic is "hit" by an enemy all of his rings scatter, and disappear after a few moments. If he reaches the end with more than 50 rings, Sonic can enter a special pinball-like stage and obtain a Chaos Emerald. In order to win the game entirely, the player must collect all of the Chaos Emeralds.

Sonic's developers worked 19 hours a day for several months, resolving animation issues and optimizing the game to ensure a great experience, given that Sonic was to become Sega's flaghip game.

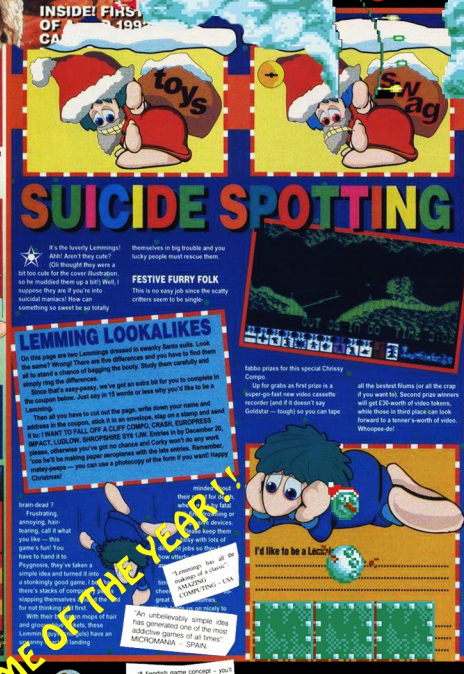
Finally, Sonic's iconic theme music was composed by bassist and songwriter of Japanese pop-band Dreams Come True, Masato Nakamura. He was inspired by the team's desire to be "better than Mario", but had a difficult time composing the tune since the Genesis could only output four sounds at a time.



Sonic wasn't the only cool new video-game animal to crawl out of 1991... UK studio DMA Design's (later Rockstar) Lemmings had players work to guide a procession of lemmings through a lanscape of traps, dead-ends and bottomless pits towards freedom. Players must save a certain number of lemmings in order to advance to the next level.

To accomplish this, players are given a number of different attributes they can assign to certain lemmings, for example "digger", which gives target lemmings the ability to dig through walls, allowing the rest of the lemmings through.

Lemmings would become an incredibly popular game on the Amiga platform, later ported to many others.



Lemmings would become the second highest-rate game in the history of Amstrad Action magazine, and is estimated to have sold 20 million copies between various computer and console systems. It had several sequels and spinoffs, including Christmas Lemmings.

A series of short Christmas games were developed between 1991 and 1994 which were distributed as free "demo programs".

FINAL SPECS RELEASED ON THE SEGA 16-BIT CD-ROM FOR GENESIS!!

The CD-ROM adapter first shown in the Buyer's Guide special issue of EGM now appears to be closer to completion than ever before! This exciting new piece of hardware, which will allow Sega Genesis owners to upgrade their current system with CD-ROM capabilities is now in the final prototype form according to sources close to the project in Japan.

As we had originally been told, the Genesis CD-ROM will come equipped with a much more powerful array of abilities than those of its closest competition, the TurboGrafx-16. This will be done through an advanced chip set, extra RAM, more memory space and a super charged chip set that will allow the Genesis CD-ROM produce much more realistic sounds and music.

On board the Genesis peripheral will be a full 512K-bytes of RAM, equal to over 4,000 meg! An additional 540 meg of memory space will be instantly accessible at any one time, however, making the need for constant updating and reloading of information less frequent. Instead of displaying only a few images or rounds at a time

Look for a new, more detailed and realistic version of Super Monaco GP!

28

NEWS SPECIAL REPORT

MEGADRIVE CD ROM: THE FACTS REVEALED!

Hot! Hot! Hot! As the world waits for the imminent Megadrive CD-ROM, here's some hotter-than-hot exclusive news on Sega's amazing bolt-on box of tricks.

CVG has been treated to a brief sneaky peak at Sega's wonder machine, and our gobs were well and truly smacked at what it's capable of!

For start the CD-ROM features a completely new processor (which runs at 12mhz - nearly twice as fast as an Amiga), extra sound chips, and special custom graphics chips which give sprite and background scaling as standard.

potential - like proper arcade laser disk machines! And the amazing early demo we were shown more than proved the point!

Not only will the machine be able to handle music CDs, it'll also do the business with graphics CD packages - so it looks like the sky's the limit for all-round action stations! Early indications are that the machine will cost between £250 and £300 price when it's officially released.

The CD can hold up to 550 megabytes of information, which means you could have Strider, one of the largest Megadrive games, recorded 680 times on one CD. Wow! The first games to appear on the Mega CD will take full advant-

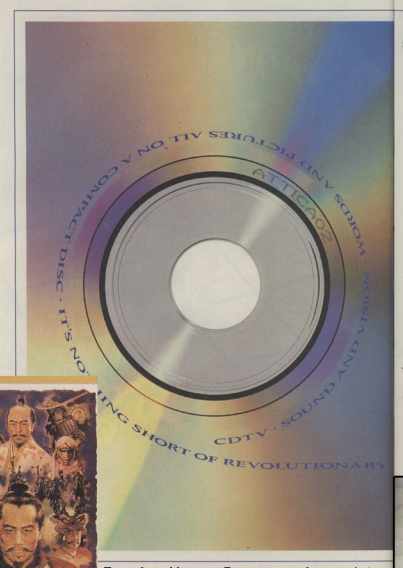
age of this extra memory, featuring tons of levels and zillions of graphics.

These work in conjunction with the Megadrive when both machines are connected together, and the end result is truly astonishing, resulting in utterly jaw-dropping 3D games (like Super Famicom F-Zero and Pi-

Japanese game designers Game Arts are releasing two titles to coincide with the launch of the machine. Both are RPGs, the first, **Lunar The Silver Star** is a standard wander around and collect the stuff game, while the second, with an untranslatable Japanese title, is a more strategic wargame thingy, with Samurai warriors and feuding clans as a background.

Some lucky so-and-sos will probably be able to get their hands on one through grey import in the not-too-distant future, but we guarantee they'll cost the Earth 'cos these machines will be very thin on the ground!

More news the very second we get it, but for now take it from us that the Megadrive CD ROM looks set to give the Fami-



Imagine a compact disc that not only gives great quality sound. It also plays books, photographs, graphics and the written word. ▶ CDTV is like nothing you've experienced before. And it's everything you could want for entertainment, education and excitement. ⏸ Picture, for instance, a child asking the question, "Who was Martin Luther King?" ⏭ Easy. You just turn on the TV, put in a political history CD and not only can you read everything about King's life, you'll also see his face, hear the crowds and feel the emotion in his voice as he tells you his dream. But that's only one way of looking at it. ■ With CDTV in your sitting room, suddenly you're not just researching, it's a mine of information. A book that talks back. The world's best teacher. A CD quality home karaoke. Or a most talented games player. ⏯ And if you're happy changing channels on your TV remote, you could work CDTV in seconds. Just select your choice of title from the 150 available and you're away. ▶ Take music. Of course, you can play your audio CDs. But by pressing the buttons on your remote, you could also play drums with Hendrix. No experience required. Or remix any of your CDs to create your own versions. If your tastes are more classical, listen to Beethoven's music while you see a picture of the composer and read about his life's works. That's multimedia in its truest sense. ▶▶ "Switch off the TV while you're doing your homework!" That phrase could soon all but disappear. Because what better way to swot up on Shakespeare than by acting in a play and speaking the part of, say, Romeo with CDTV as your prompt. ▲ For sheer entertainment, there's nothing to touch CDTV. With Trivial Pursuits, you're not just answering questions on a card. You can ask, for example, "Who is the person singing this song?" ⏯ Whatever your interest, whatever your age, CDTV is a totally new way of looking at every subject under the sun. ■ For only £499 including VAT, the price of a good CD player, you are combining fantastic CD sound with the familiarity of television. The world's going round that no home should be without CDTV.

Commodore CDTV

Basically a Commodore Amiga 500 with a CD-ROM and a remote control, the CDTV was marketed as an all-in-one multimedia device, capable of playing movies, music, multi-media CD-ROMs and games. However, at $999 USD the system was quite expensive, and did not sell very well. Also, titles for the system worked on an Amiga with a CD-ROM, encouraging Amiga owners to buy a CD-ROM instead of a CDTV.

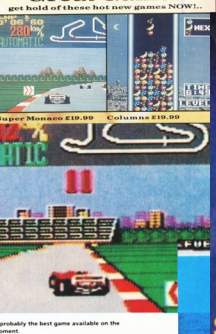
The Sega CD allowed for games 320-times larger (in data terms) than a conventional Mega Drive cartridge, allowing for large amounts of full-motion video and digital sound.

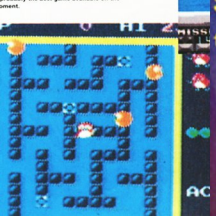
While only a limited number of Sega CD-specific games were made (mostly full-motion video titles), Sonic CD stands out as one of the best CD titles, with a time-travel mechanic that allowed players to access different versions of stages, with alternate graphics, layouts and music.

Sonic CD was ported to iOS in 2011 and has a rating of 93/100 on Metacritic.

The Game Gear was Sega's entry into the hand-held gaming market. With a colour screen and backward compatibility with the Sega Master System, the Game Gear was an attractive product, but with its short battery life it had difficulties making inroads against the Game Boy, its primary competitor.

In North America, Sega marketed the Game Gear aggressively, calling Game Boy owners "stupid" and "fat", saying "if you were colour-blind and had an IQ of less than 12, then you wouldn't mind which portable you had", drawing fire from Nintendo, who attempted to get Sega sanctioned for insulting disabled people -- a charge Sega countered by telling Nintendo they should spend more time on their games.





THESE PIRATES HAVE TONGUES AS SHARP AS THEIR SWORDS.

Lucasfilm™ Games' swashbuckling new graphic adventure lets you trade insults with some of the saltiest seamen to ever sail the seven seas.

In *The Secret of Monkey Island*,™ you'll sling one-liners with a fast-talking used ship salesman, a sarcastic swordmaster, a wisecracking corpse, and a prisoner whose breath would stop a horse. You'll also hunt for buried treasure, chase after a beautiful woman, and—perhaps—unravel one of the twistiest plots in the history of adventure gaming.

You're short, broke, clueless and friendless.

And you've just arrived on Mêlée Island seeking fame and fortune. Explaining to anyone who'll listen that you want to be a pirate.

Being the easy-going types they are, your new pirate pals invite you into the club. Just as soon as you've completed three *tiny* trials.

Among other things, you'll need to sedate some piranha poodles, burglarize the governor's mansion, and do business with the scum of the earth. And if that's not enough, you'll have to figure out whether the 300-pound voodoo priestess covers your rubber chicken, fetid fish, pack of breath mints, or…

If the brigands don't grab you, the graphics will.

Lucasfilm Games set today's graphic standards with games like *Loom* and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. Now *The Secret of Monkey Island* ups the standards a few more notches with stunning 256-color VGA graphics (16-color EGA version also available), proportionally scaled animated characters, and cinematic pans and camera angles.

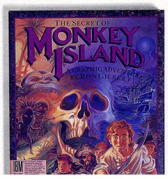
Our acclaimed point 'n' click interface has been improved even more. So have our sound effects, which are backed by a captivating calypso and reggae music track.

Enter the Monkey Island Treasure Hunt and win a FREE Carnival Caribbean cruise!

If you can solve a few sneaky puzzles in a special demo of *The Secrets of Monkey Island*, you might just win one of the sweetest prizes since Captain Kidd's treasure chest. A Carnival Cruise for two, one of a hundred AdLib™ sound cards, or one of hundreds more prizes! You'll find the demo and complete rules in specially marked boxes of 3M diskettes. Or send a self-addressed, stamped disk mailer to: Monkey Demo, PO Box 10228, San Rafael, CA 94912.

So act fast, think fast, and enter fast. Because while playing *The Secret of Monkey Island* is an adventure, winning the Treasure Hunt is a real trip.

LUCASFILM GAMES
A DIVISION OF LUCASARTS ENTERTAINMENT COMPANY



Circle Reader Service #49

The Secret of Monkey Island is available for IBM and 100% compatibles in 16-color EGA and 256-color VGA versions. Visit your retailer or order directly with Visa/MC by calling 1-800-STARWARS (in Canada 1-800-828-7927). * and © 1990, Lucasfilm Entertainment Company. All rights reserved. IBM is a trademark of International Business Machines, Inc. AdLib is a trademark of AdLib, Inc. Cruise prize arranged with the "Fun Ships" of Carnival Cruise Lines. The Most Popular Cruise Line in The World. Ship's registry: Bahamas and Liberia.

NOBODY LAUGHS WHEN THIS PIRATE PLAYS WITH DOLLS.

It's giving Guybrush a headache.
He's become a bore, endlessly telling the story of Monkey Island I. If the braggart doesn't find a new crusade soon, he'll be buying his own grog at the Bloody Lip Bar.

Vengeance is his trademark.™
In Monkey Island 1 LeChuck's nuptial vows went up in fizz. Now he's back with a new vow—wreak revenge on Guybrush Threepwood.

Who will cough up the Big Whoop?
This legendary treasure of the high seas is up for grabs. There's more at stake than just wealth; for Guybrush it's his last chance to certify himself as a world class pirate on a pirate's ship in a pirate's sea blah blah blah.

Visit faraway islands and get lost.
Take your pick of adventures from Scabb to Phatt Island. And with multiple levels of play, even your average marketing type can feel smart.

We've reassembled the original cast.
Stan's back in a new undertaking. Along with the Voodoo Priestess, Governor Marley, and other favorites from Monkey I. Plenty of cryptic in-jokes, too.

Incredible VGA art.
We hired 256 out-of-work artists from Los Angeles and crammed them six-deep in an office until they came up with pictures we liked.

Incredible music and sound effects.
All of the musicians we wanted are working in '70's comeback bands. So we scored a few tunes ourselves, added some great sound effects and went home.

We did the best we could.
We're not perfect. But we think scanned art, scintillating soundtracks, rehashed jokes and a great story get us close—and over budget, too.

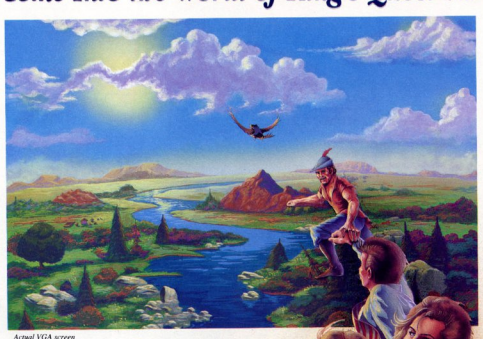
Le Chuck's Revenge
MONKEY ISLAND 2

Haunting secrets from the first game revealed

Illiteracy-driven icon system

Thicker, richer puzzley goodness

Come Into the World of King's Quest® V...


Actual VGA screen

...and Bring the Family!

Roberta Williams returns to your computer screen with the most wonderful King's Quest ever!

This time your whole family will journey with Good King Graham and Cedric the talking owl through the eerie gloom of the Dark Forest, across blazing deserts, over vast mountains and oceans in search of scenes, lifelike animation and breathtaking soundtrack where characters will actually speak to you and each other in their own voices.* No typing is required, so it's like playing a game – it's like being there! Experience the magical world of King's Quest V, and discover why more people have played King's Quest than any other computer game series in history.

*2 3.5 MB of hard disk space only

SIERRA

Order King's Quest V from your local software dealer, or call the Sierra Sales Department toll free at (800) 326-6654. Outside the U.S., dial (209) 683-4468
Available on Disk and CD!

Scorpion's Tale

Heretofore Untold, Scorpia Reveals

THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND™

Guybrush Threepwood, a young man who dreams of becoming a pirate, is the subject of The Secret of Monkey Island, a Lucasfilm game wherein the player explores the titular island in his quest to complete three tasks set by the island's pirate leaders and become a pirate himself. The game is navigated by "pointing-and-clicking" on various items and characters, asking questions and solving puzzles.

Another point-and-click series, King's Quest is a long-running franchise of graphic adventure games, which chronicles the saga of the royal family of the Kingdom of Daventry as they face various adventures, fighting evil witches and wizards to defend their kingdom.

Warning: Although "The Scorpion's Tale" is a warm and comfortable tavern of the mind with a nice cozy fire of vibrant images, our resident storyteller conjures up illuminating hints about games. If the gentle reader eschews hints, let him beware!

So, here we are, in December. Fred's given up on finding that lost month for now. He's busy with all sorts of holiday preparations (don't ask . . .). But, he says he'll start looking again sometime in the spring. Good luck, Fred, you'll need it. Speaking of looking, this is the time of year many people look for a warm spot to spend a couple of weeks away from the winter's cold. If you're one of those, I know this great little spot in the Caribbean . . .

The Secret of Monkey Island, from **Lucasfilm**, is the saga of a pirate wannabe, Guybrush Threepwood. Really. I'll just call him Guy from now on, it's easier all around.

The game is fairly easy, too. In terms of difficulty, it's about a step and a half up from Loom. Much more to do and more puzzles to solve. Also, there's plenty of humor in Monkey Island. Basically, the game is played for laughs and it comes off well. This is a funny adventure.

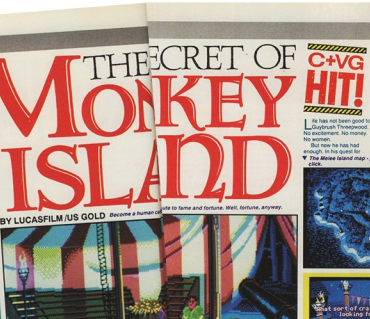
The graphics are nice, although not quite so good as *Loom*. I now have a sound card (yep!), and found the musical scores (real tunes, not just sound effects) to be quite good (the jazzy jungle beat is my favorite). I have to admit, real music in the right places does add some spice to a game.

This is also smart software. It knows what graphic card and sound card (if any) you have and activates them automatically. No tedious menus to wade through while answering questions about your system. I like that. Of course, if you do want to change anything, there are instructions for doing that manually.

The interface is simple, much like the one in *Loom*. The best part is that there is no silliness about you're not close enough" to pick up an item. Just click on it, and Guy will walk over and grab it (unless obtaining the item is part of a puzzle). This is one game where you don't have to worry about maneuvering your character precisely around the screen.

(Continued on page 43)

Computer Gaming World



WILLY BEAMISH

Remember Roger Rabbit? Disney's multi-million dollar cartoon/live action epic that tried to both capture the imagination of today's yoof and rekindle the old Saturday afternoon matinee feelings lying dormant in all those jaffa-sent adults? There was something for everyone. For the kids there was the crash bang animation and for the grown-ups there was a bit of smut courtesy of Jessica Rabbit and Dame Judi Dench popping from Bob Hoskins' pocket. The movie was deemed a performance at the box office, containing turn-off elements for both sexes. Grown-ups weren't necessarily keen on animated yuk and kids didn't understand all the jokes.

Willy Beamish attempts an alarmingly similar political trick. It's unclear exactly which end of the market Sierra are pitching at. The evidence on one hand – the machismo of running on the side packaging and the cute would-be-gangster portfolio. The nature of the graphically sprawling puzzles. The nature of the game's style and the storyline, however, would seem more akin to a kiddy game.

But hey, hey, hey! There ain't no comic strip for kids, it's an interactive cartoon, dontcha know? Sierra wanted to create something kinda sorta completely new, so rats the pot went all three ways and gosh darn if this ain't what we ended up with. Yes, even if the pre-teklkers wide-eyed geekiness doesn't quite match the game's final assembly (starting his way through a particularly turgid medical "treatment" spiced by Principal Prick, Harmy (who lives in Willy's rucksack) personally has a lower bottom tolerance level than the pupils and pounces on Prick, causing much pandemonium and dislodging the slop-headed Principal's glasses, and Ken faces all round and a detention for Willy).

It's during the detention scene while Willy dreams of Nintari fame and a dotty old spinster deals out a monotone judgement that finally, the player gets into the game. The cutaway changes from the real-life drawing watch scene to an arcade, indicating that there's some interaction to be had.

Once into the game itself, the familiar Dynamix interaction format is adopted, albeit in its latest stage of polish. Head & shoulders shots of characters interlaye over the fade-out backgrounds while in conversation. The smart cursor floats over the play area changing between an impressive diagonal arrow and a smaller 'action' arrow indicating that there's an object to be taken or manipulated or a task to perform. Exits are denoted by a large green flat sign.

It was *Rise of the Dragon* (an ACE Covergem, in fact) that first made UK software buyers sit up and pay attention to Dynamix games. The story of a futuristic detective endeavouring to solve a complex narcotic related murder gripped both public and reviewers alike for all of a fortnight. The problem with the game, you see, was that it simply ended too quickly. Partially a symptom of its own success, Rise's short-term appeal resulted from a) being fascinatingly addictive and b) never allowing the player to languish in boring dead-ends. The game moves along at such a pace that players putting in a lot of effort would finish it rather too quickly.

Beamish suffers from similar problems, although to a less serious degree. There's enough freedom of exploration and sheer distance to cover to slow down the plot sufficiently - an indication of the frankly unbelievable learning curve of game development of which Dynamix a surely coming to the end.

he game works fantastically well, fooling the player into believing he's only an impassive viewer and then allowing him to progress the story to satisfy himself.

asic icons for family structures, while being about as subtle as being hit on the head with a brick, make it easy for the player to deal with complex dialogue.

Willy Beamish was another point-and-click game, this time featuring a mischievious nine-year old boy attempting to avoid being sent to military school by his parents. Despite the main protagonist being a nine-year old boy, the game is quite adult-oriented, with many sexual puns and satire.

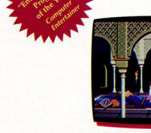
Prince of Persia, programmed by Karateka designer Jordan Mechner, was notable for its use of fluid animation and life-like character movement. Originally released for the Apple II, the game features an unnamed protagonist attempting to rescue a princess from the evil Grand Vizer Jaffar.

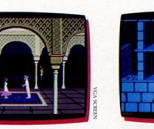
PoP would go on to become a franchise of several games, and a motion picture.

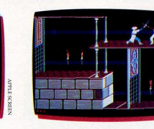
"You really have to see it to believe it."

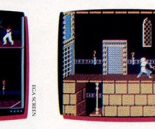
Computer Entertainer

Entertainment Program of the Year — Computer Entertainer









It's like an Arabian nights movie come to life . . . with you as the star! In Prince of Persia, you'll plunge into an exotic world of challenging puzzles, tumultuous action and animation so fantastic it has reviewers reaching for superlatives:

"(★★★★/★★★★) Incredibly realistic. . . . The adventurer character actually looks human as he runs, jumps, climbs and hangs from ledges."

Computer Entertainer

"An unmitigated delight . . . comes as close to (perfection) as any arcade game has come in a long, long, long time . . . what makes this game so wonderful (am I gushing?) is that the little onscreen character does not move like a little onscreen character—he moves like a person."

Nibble

"Superb double-high-resolution graphics images and responsive, smooth animation work beautifully together to create an almost cinematic experience."

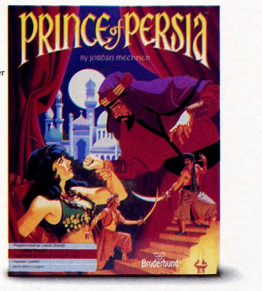
inCider/A+

"A tremendous achievement . . . Mechner has crafted the smoothest animation ever seen in a game of this type. *Prince of Persia* is the *Star Wars* of its field."

Computer Gaming World

But don't take their word. You really *do* have to see it to believe it.

Available for IBM®/PC/Tandy® and 100% compatibles, Amiga® 500/1000/2000/3000; Apple® IIe/IIc/IIc Plus/IIGs.
Suggested retail price: Apple, $34.95; IBM and Amiga,$39.95.



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Thank You

for joining us in our trip down consumer technology's "memory lane", looking at Christmas gifts from the 1980s and early 90s. We hope you enjoyed it!

You'll be seeing more from us soon (that's not a threat, it's a promise! ;)

Merry Christmas
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